



FAA Production Studio News

July 2003

World Aerobatic Championships

By Cheryl DeFilippo & Hugh Hardy
FAA Production Studio Staff

For “only” the third time since its inception in 1960, the World Aerobatic Championships was hosted in the United States of America at the Sun ‘n Fun Fly-in Campus, Lakeland, FL on June 25 – July 4, 2003.

The International Aerobatic Club (IAC), as the governing body for aerobatics in the United States, and in partnership with Sun ‘n Fun Fly-in, Inc., coordinated the 10-day international event.

The FAA Production Studios was pleased to host a live uplink of “Plane Time” hosted by Ben Coleman, SPM Airworthiness, FSDO-15. The show was broadcast live via the ATN and GETN satellite links.

Ben interviewed two panels during the uplink: Phil Knight, Contest Director; John Gaillard, Chief Judge; Michael Heuer, Jury President; Gerry Molitor, IAC President, Wayne Boggs, FAA Special Events Coordinator; and John Burton, President of Sun ‘n Fun.

The World Aerobatic Championships awards individual men and women world titles, as well as national team titles, in aerobatic flight. Pilots, representatives, officials and judges from 20 countries participated in the event.

The interview revealed many interesting details about the event as well as the strict criteria regarding how the pilots are required to fly.





Pilot competitors were judged on their ability to fly a series of compulsory and freestyle flights. One flight is known and practiced before the competition. Another flight is unknown to the competitor until hours before the pilot takes flight. And yet another flight tests a pilot's skill to design and fly a program that is both technically challenging and artistically appealing to an audience.

Phil Knight, Contest Director - After two tours in Vietnam Phil returned to the U.S. and pursued a dream of acrobatic flying. He holds numerous U.S. National Competition and international Aerobatic Competition titles and has served as a Board member of the United States Aerobatic Foundation for the past seven years and as President of the organization for the past three years.

John Gaillard, Chief Judge - John has served as Chief Judge of WAC and AWAC on more occasions than anyone in aerobatic history and is highly respected at the world level for his experience and ideas. His international judging experience began in Switzerland in 1990 he then moved to the Chief Judge's seat in 1996 in Oklahoma City. He serves as South Africa's delegate to CIVA and CIVA's 1st Vice President as well as chairman of the CIVA judging subcommittee. John is a company director and winner of the FAI's Paul Tissandier Diploma.

Michael Heuer, Jury President - Mike is the President of the FAI International Aerobatics Commission (CIVA) and has served on the International Jury at 12 world championships and numerous US national aerobatic championships. As a captain on the Airbus A-320 for a major international carrier, he served twenty years in the military as a pilot. Competing for over 20 years, he also has served on various air sports governing bodies and is a former President of IAC and one of its founding members. He is a Vice President of FAI and a holder of the FAI Paul Tissandier Diploma and an inductee in the International Aerobatics Hall of Fame.

After an exhilarating week of competition the winners overall by country were:

1st Place	Russian Team
2nd Place	French Team
3rd Place	USA Team

Many thanks to the Production Crew who volunteered over a thousand hours to prepare the studio and staff the studio for the week and a half event. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed. You are to be commended for another "job well done!"

See you at the studio!!!